

It is only to be expected that a convention of "protected" persons would resolve that "protection" is a good thing. Hence the monopolists who are fed and pampered at the expense of consumers by our tariff system can never be sufficiently thankful for the "blessings" they enjoy. It is proper, therefore, that they should hold a convention, as they are doing at Chicago, to sing praises to the stupidity of the millions who permit themselves to be plundered that the few may be enriched. Privately not more than 300,000 persons are employed in all lines of "protected" manufacturing industry in the United States, and of these a comparatively few have all the profits. To enrich them the whole body of consumers—millions of people—are made to pay high prices for goods. And this convention tries to sugar the pill with the information that the system is a "blessing."

But still the harmony of the occasion was disturbed by questions put by men who "want to know." For instance, a delegate from Iowa, formerly a representative in Congress, asked an inquiry as to whether there was a combination in the Bissell patent to enhance unreasonably the price of steel rails and bushes. In this way the agricultural interests of the country, in a convention of "protectionists" in inquiry like this is absurdly out of place. The sole object of the laws which refer to the manufacture of steel is to make the price high, so as to tax agricultural and other consumers for the benefit of steel monopolists. These monopolists are protected on one side by the patent laws, and on the other by the tariff laws. Therefore they can limit the supply of steel rails as they please and charge what prices they please. In the United States there are only eleven steel rail mills. The holders of the patent do not want and will not permit any more to go into operation. The reason is that there would be competition with which the price would be reduced. Too many rails would be offered on the market. Thus the patent monopoly, aided by the tariff, can make the price what it likes. For besides giving this monopoly the advantage it has under the patent, the government lays a duty of \$22 per ton on steel rails, which is virtually prohibitory. It is easy to see the result of this system. In the first place the duty on foreign rails increases the price of home-made rails \$28 per ton. To guard against a home competition which might in time reduce the price, the patent is employed to keep down the number of rail mills; and so the monopoly has the market all to itself.

Here is a grievous burden to agriculture. The system increases greatly the cost of building and operating railroads. Nobody supposes that the railroad companies bear it. They make it up by increase of rates for transportation, and the charge is passed on to another, till at last it falls on agricultural labor, which can pay it no further.

Iron and steel enter into all the uses and requirements of civilized life. They are either a constituent of every article, or are used in manufacturing it. Thus the cost of the hardware in one's pocket and of the nails in one's shoe is affected by the tariff on iron and steel. The farmer cannot buy a plow; or a harness, get a horse or dog or a hand of nails in swaging a gate, without paying tribute to the "protection," which the members of this convention count so great a "blessing" to themselves—the protected ones.

Protection may pass for a blessing to those whom it protects, but to those whom it punishes, it is quite another thing. Its specific object is to limit the competition for supply and thus enable the manufacturer to charge high prices to the consumer. The system requires the consumer as having no rights at all except the right to be plundered—which is a "blessing" to the plunderers, no doubt; but it is a burden to which government, since government is instituted for the equal good of all, has no just right to lend itself.

COUNTY ASSESSMENTS.

The great value of taxable property in Linn county, according to assessor's return, is \$6,200,472. This amount is returned at \$1,390,000, and exemptions, \$9,179,121. These amounts deducted, the total value of taxable property in the county is \$4,020,447.

Assessor's return for Marion county place

the gross value of property at \$6,715,683.

Assessor's return for Polk county place

the gross value of property at \$6,715,683.

It will probably surprise readers to

observe that the taxable property of Linn

is so much in excess of that of Marion.

Upon just and equal valuations, the property of the last named county could hardly fall below that of the first. Therefore the valuation of the two counties have been more nearly equal.

Some changes seem to have passed unnoticed by the legislature at its last session.

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Thus the taxable property of that county was reduced at \$4,198,400. It is now only \$4,462,944.

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